

REMARKS

Prior to this Amendment, claims 14-31 were pending in the present application. By this Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 14-23 and 25-31 and added new claims 32-33. No new matter has been added by this Amendment.

I. Specification

Applicants have amended the specification to add headings. As such, the Examiner's objection is overcome.

II. 35 USC §102(b) Rejections

Claims 14-17 and 23-25 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,405,544 ("Hiraoka"). As discussed in more detail below, Hiraoka does not teach or suggest a plurality of operating elements that each include a respective status display device which is activated when the operating element is in an actuatable state and deactivated when the operating element is in a non-actuatable state.

A. Independent Claim 14

Hiraoka does not teach or suggest the subject matter of amended Claim 14. For example, Hiraoka does not teach or suggest "a plurality of operating elements, each operating element actuatable by a user in an actuatable state and not actuatable by the user in a non-actuatable state."

In contrast, Hiraoka discloses a "switch portion 7b including a button for selecting a chamber subjected to a temperature control and 'a button for controlling the temperature inside the selected chamber' having prints of upward and downward arrows." Col. 8, lines 59-63; Fig. 3. Hiraoka also discloses that "[t]he user operates a chamber subjected to quick cooling through the switch portion 7b, i.e. the switch for selecting the chamber subjected to quick cooling or a chamber subjected to temperature

control through the switch for selecting the chamber subjected to temperature control.” Col. 9, lines 31-36.

Thus, Hiraoka merely teaches using an operating element (a button) for selecting and controlling a chamber and does not disclose the button being in either an actuatable or non-actuatable state. Therefore, Hiraoka does not teach or suggest a plurality of operating elements actuatable by a user when in an actuatable state and not actuatable by the user when in a non-actuatable state.

Hiraoka also does not teach or suggest “activat[ing] the status display device of each operating element that is in an actuatable state and deactivat[ing] the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuatable state,” as recited in amended Claim 14.

Instead, Hiraoka discloses, “[t]he temperature controller 7 includes the liquid crystal display portion 7a for showing states of the temperatures inside various chambers.” Col. 8, lines 57-59, emphasis added. Hiraoka also discloses that “a medium mode between a low mode and a high mode [is] designated by a black dot.” Col. 9, lines 3-4.

Therefore, Hiraoka merely teaches a temperature display that indicates a current temperature state of a chamber using a black dot. At no point does Hiraoka disclose that the buttons that control the temperature display give an indication of being in an actuatable or non-actuatable state.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set out above, independent Claim 14 is allowable and dependent Claims 15-25, which depend from Claim 14, are also allowable.

III. 35 USC §103(a) Rejections

A. Independent Claim 26

Claims 26-28 and 30 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiraoka in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,104,319 (“Shpater”). As discussed in more detail below, Shpater does not teach or suggest illuminating operating elements to give an indication of each operating element being in an actuatable state or a non-actuatable state.

Specifically, Hiraoka and Shpater, taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest “each respective light source being in an illuminated state when the button is actuatable by the user and in a non-illuminated state when the button is not actuatable by the user.”

As noted by the Examiner, “Hiraoka, however, does not disclose each button having a light source.” Office action dated September 27, 2007, page 6. Shpater does not cure the deficiencies of Hiraoka.

Shpater merely discloses that, “[w]hen armed, the light indicator of the combined switch and indicator light assembly is on, and when the indicator light is off the system is disarmed.” Col. 1, lines 24-26. Shpater also discloses that “the LED 12 in that key zone will illuminate and if the security zones are bypassed the LEDs 12 in the key zones corresponding to the numerical security zones will be illuminated.” Col. 5, lines 3-6.

Shpater merely teaches that the indicator light for each key indicates whether or not the system is armed or disarmed. At no point does Shpater disclose illuminating each key to give an indication of being in an actuatable state or a non-actuatable state.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set out above, independent Claim 26 is allowable and dependent Claims 27-31, which depend from Claim 26, are also allowable.

B. Claim 18

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiraoka in view of U.S. Publication No. 2003/0202337 (“Yin”). Claim 18 depends from Claim 14 and is, therefore, allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 14.

Additionally, Yin does not cure the deficiencies of Hiraoka discussed above.

Yin relates to keys for use in low light conditions and merely discloses that an “open region 154 therefore allows the phosphorescent material to be more rapidly charged.” Paragraph 28, lines 14-15. Yin also discloses that “the indicia 136 is visible because the keys emit visible light (or ‘glow in the dark’) from a region in the shape of

the indicia so long as the phosphorescent material was previously exposed to light energy.” Paragraph 29, lines 1-5.

Yin merely teaches using a light sensitive phosphorescent material to illuminate a key. Yin does not disclose that the illumination of the keys gives an indication of the keys being in an actuatable or non-actuatable state.

Therefore, Yin clearly does not teach or suggest “activat[ing] the status display device of each operating element that is in an actuatable state and deactivat[ing] the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuatable state,” as recited in Claim 14.

Accordingly, independent Claim 14 is allowable, and Claim 18, which depends from Claim 14, is also allowable.

C. Claim 19

Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiraoka in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,970,726 (“Takayanagi”). Claim 19 depends from Claim 14 and is, therefore, allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 14.

Additionally, Takayanagi does not cure the deficiencies of Hiraoka discussed above.

Takayanagi relates to a power consumption reduction method and discloses that “power consumption is minimized by automatically turning off the backlight when neither input operation nor interrupt occurs for a predetermined period of time or automatically stopping [the] setting operation when no input operation is done during the setting operation and shifting to a power saving standby state.” Col. 2, lines 26-31.

Takayanagi merely teaches turning off a backlight when in a power saving state. Takayanagi does not disclose turning off the backlight to indicate an actuatable state or a non-actuatable state.

Therefore, Takayanagi clearly does not teach or suggest “activat[ing] the status display device of each operating element that is in an actuatable state and deactivat[ing]

the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuable state,” as recited in Claim 14.

Accordingly, independent Claim 14 is allowable, and Claim 19, which depends from Claim 14, is also allowable.

D. Claim 21

Claim 21 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiraoka in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,099,193 (“Moseley”). Claim 21 depends from Claim 14 and is, therefore, allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 14.

Additionally, Moseley does not cure the deficiencies of Hiraoka discussed above.

Moseley relates to a “remotely controllable power control system wherein the power supplied to a load may be varied locally via an actuator.” Abstract, lines 1-3. Moseley does not disclose an actuator with a respective status display device that gives an indication of being in an actuable state or a non-actuable state.

Therefore, Moseley clearly does not teach or suggest “activat[ing] the status display device of each operating element that is in an actuable state and deactivat[ing] the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuable state,” as recited in Claim 14.

Accordingly, independent Claim 14 is allowable, and Claim 21, which depends from Claim 14, is also allowable.

E. Claim 29

Claim 29 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiraoka in view of Shpater and U.S. Patent No. 5,487,276 (“Namisniak”). Claim 29 depends from Claim 26 and is, therefore, allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 26.

Additionally, Namisniak does not cure the deficiencies of Hiraoka and Shpater discussed above.

Namisniak relates to a food inventory system for monitoring perishable foods and discloses “a numeric display [that] is provided so that the length of time an item has been stored can be readily determined and compared with the safe storage lifetime.” Abstract, lines 14-16. Namisniak also discloses that “the microprocessor, however, will track the set lifetime information. When only two days of life remain for an item, its status light 60 will be lit. When the item actually expires, the status light 60 will begin to flash slowly.” Col. 9, lines 29-33.

Namisniak merely teaches a display that indicates a remaining storage life for an item and a status light that is activated after a predetermined time interval.

Therefore, Namisniak does not teach or suggest a “respective light source being in an illuminated state when the button is actuatable by the user and in a non-illuminated state when the button is not actuatable by the user,” as recited in amended Claim 26.

Accordingly, independent Claim 26 is allowable, and Claim 29, which depends from Claim 26, is allowable.

F. Claim 31

Claim 31 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiraoka in view of Shpater and U.S. Patent No. 6,295,004 (“Burnett”). Claim 31 depends from Claim 26 and is, therefore, allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 26.

Additionally, Burnett does not cure the deficiencies of Hiraoka and Shpater discussed above.

Burnett relates to an appliance warning light device and discloses a “visible hazard warning device which emits light from a surface of an appliance or its open front door to advise persons working in the vicinity of the appliance that the front door is open and represents an accident hazard to lower legs.” Col. 2, lines 22-28.

Burnett merely teaches a warning light. Burnett does not disclose the warning light giving any indication of the appliance’s operating elements being in an actuatable state or a non-actuatable state.

Therefore, Burnett clearly does not teach or suggest a “respective light source being in an illuminated state when the button is actuatable by the user and in a non-illuminated state when the button is not actuatable by the user,” as recited in amended Claim 26.

Accordingly, independent Claim 26 is allowable, and Claim 31, which depends from Claim 26, is also allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 14-31 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted



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